

02-230

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02-230

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Friday, October 24 2003

Commissioner Kevin J. Martin
445 12th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

OCT 24 2003

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

VIA FACSIMILE

Dear Commissioner Martin,

As a consumer of broadcast television, electronics, and computer products, I urge the Federal Communications Commission to vote against the adoption of a "broadcast flag." I am gravely concerned that a broadcast flag regulation would restrict the way I enjoy television.

The "broadcast flag" will make many HDTV owners' current equipment obsolete and cost hundreds or thousands of dollars to replace. This is not in the public interest, rather it is in the interest of Jack Valenti and his paranoid, greedy friends in Hollywood. If you had listened to them 30 years ago about Betamax and their Sky is falling routine where would we be. Those men care nothing for the public, only in preserving an artificial, government supported monopoly disguised as a "standard."

The digital television transition relies on convincing consumers of the benefits of switching to and buying digital television equipment. That transition will be far more palatable to me as a consumer if switching doesn't mean discarding my existing home network, buying new high-resolution displays, and finding room for yet another device in my living room. Please do not allow the MPAA and its allies to hinder the transition by making us buy special-purpose DTV devices that are more expensive and less valuable.

In addition, I am very concerned about the fair-use implications of the broadcast flag. With today's technology, I can be more than a passive recipient of content -- I can modify, create, and participate. I can record TV to watch later; clip a small piece of TV and splice it into a home movie; send an email clip of my child's football game to a distant relative; or record a TV program onto a DVD and play it at my friend's apartment. The broadcast flag seems designed to remove this control and flexibility that I enjoy.

If the move to digital television does not make the public's viewing experience more enjoyable, flexible, and exciting, what compelling reason do I have as a consumer to buy new digital equipment? A prettier TV picture is hardly enough reason for me to dispense with all my current consumer electronics and computer equipment. As a citizen and consumer of broadcast television, I urge you to promote the digital transition by opposing the broadcast flag.

Sincerely,

James Domenico
400 43rd AVE
San Francisco, CA 94121